



NARRATIVE

OF

THE PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Associate (Antiburgher) Synods,

IN

IRELAND AND SCOTLAND,

IN THE AFFAIR OF

The Royal Bounty.

WITH

REMARKS ON ORDINATION.

~~~~~  
 BY JAMES BRYCE.  
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“ And if this come to the Governor’s ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught.”

BELFAST:

PRINTED BY F. D. FINLAY,

JOY’S-COURT.

~~~~~  
 1816.

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## PREFACE.

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MY object, by this Narrative, is not so much to give a full and minute detail of every thing that might be said on the subject, as a regular and connected arrangement of the chief official documents relating to the business of the Royal Bounty: with the design of perpetuating the memory of a transaction (in the opinion of our late Synod Clerk,) “almost unparalleled in the annals of the church.” It is not then my own private judgment, nor my own personal concerns, that I have recorded in the following pages. That which I have written contains the proceedings of the two Associate Synods in Ireland and Scotland; and, whatever they may *now* think, expresses their sentiments at a certain period. I have scarcely made a remark, which they once-a-day would not have sanctioned; and the day is approaching when they must answer for all that I have written, and much more.

This Narrative has nothing to do with other Synods; no Synod in Ireland, except our own, having ever in their judicial capacity, that is, as a Synod, condemned the terms of the R. D. It is however certain, that

many individuals in other connexions have condemned the transaction both from pulpit and press. If, therefore, any of these are hereby reproved, let them be reproved. I know it is the opinion of some, that a connexion between church and state is lawful, and that the gospel cannot be supported without civil aid, or at least that it is the duty of the state to support the church. In this sentimental view the subject may be controverted; but in relation to the sentiments of the two Associate Synods, that which I have written will not for a moment suffer contradiction: yea, I am confident that the statement of the facts will bear the strictest scrutiny. Of most of the transactions I was an eye-witness; in many, principal actor. This account then will not shrink from examination by *fair trial*; and, should any attempt be made to examine it by *torture*, or otherwise to treat it with injustice, I still have in my power the amplest and surest means of defence, and the wrong shall soon be righted.

The public will readily absolve me of the crime of intending to make a party, when it is considered that for six years I have put off the solicitations of my friends, who, during that period, have frequently urged me to undertake this work; and, I believe, I should never have been roused into action, had it not been for the following circumstances. Some people, otherwise sensible, have said, "How unreasonable is it to suppose that MR. BRYCE, one man, should be right, and all the Synod wrong!" I had no idea that our business was so ill understood in the North of Ireland, that any person or persons should, in this manner, express themselves.

This way of speaking supposes two things ; first, that truth depends on numbers : if so, how could JOHN CALVIN be right, and all the other clergy of the empire wrong? Again, if truth depend on numbers, then all believers in Christ Jesus are wrong, for there are not one of these among a thousand of the many who profess the Gospel. But, second, this supposes that my brethren and I were of different opinions about the Royal Bounty. No; we never for one moment, nor in one instance, differed in our sentiments on the subject. Besides, if I am not deceived by report, even to this day we are of the same opinion one with another. Those who accepted, were, by their own confession, converted only by dreadful necessity. And

“ A man convinced against his will,  
Is of the same opinion still.”

If then I am wrong, the Synod is wrong ; and, if I be right, the Synod is right. If I am wrong, two solemn decisions of Synod have made me wrong, and kept me wrong.

It has also been said, “ But why did not MR. BRYCE do as the rest did? Why separate from his brethren ?” I answer, my brethren separated from me. They went privately, and took the spoil, every one for himself, without telling it to me, or even to the Synod. Even the two last, on whom I depended with the utmost confidence, to wit, MESSRS. NICHOLSON and DONNAN, went over to the Scotch Synod on the one side of the question, and came home on the other. In fine, that my former connexions and I have differed in practice, is a truth, a melancholy truth ; but that we





## NARRATIVE,

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**I**N entering upon this Narrative, the first thing expected by the reader, will be an account of the manner of the application, and of the manner used in obtaining the late grant of Royal Bounty. On this part of the subject, I do not reckon myself sufficiently informed to say any thing of much importance, having landed in Ireland only a few days before the plan of application to Government was concerted. I shall, however, communicate as plainly, and as regularly as I can, the few things which came under my own observation, or which are in my possession by official documents.<sup>1</sup> In

(1) That a Narrative of our proceedings against the R. D. and of the manner in which it had been obtained, was not only in contemplation, but in a state of forwardness, will appear by the following extract of a letter from the Synod Clerk:—"I do not," says he, "recollect that we agreed at Ahoghill to publish our resolutions concerning the Parliamentary Grant, and our Narrative of the manner in which it had been obtained, till after the next meeting of our Synod, when the report of the Committee will be called for, and our proceedings will be laid before them. Then, if they approve, the whole shall be published; or it may be published by those who remain, in case of a breach in the Synod, which is now much to be dreaded."

the beginning of the third week after my arrival in this country, the Associate Synod met in Belfast upon Tuesday, the 26th of July, 1803; although nothing was mentioned in Synod concerning the Bounty, yet I understand that during the intervals of sederunts, the business had been talked over by some members in private. The first conversation, in my hearing, on this affair, was in MR. NICHOLSON'S dining-room, after the Synod had dismissed. While conversing here with a few friends, a Minister entered the room, informing us that a number of our members were supposed to be now meeting in a certain house, with some Clergymen of another denomination, and concerting a plan of application for an additional Grant of Bounty. At this report every one present became dumb with silence. MR. NICHOLSON, in particular, betrayed great agitation of mind, by many restless motions and significant gestures of body. In fine, speech being resumed, it was agreed by all, that those who had acted in this manner, without the knowledge of their brethren, were highly reprehensible, and that, had the Synod not been dismissed, they ought to have been called to account for their conduct. This threatening was reserved for execution at a future period; and, I believe, that period is still future.

As I continued, for two years after this, no otherwise connected with the Associate Synod than as a preacher among their vacancies; and as I never en-

tertained the most distant thoughts of settling in the kingdom, I gave myself very little concern in these affairs, during that period. I can only say, that what was begun in secret, was carried on in private, until, in due time, a committee, consisting of a number from each Synod, was appointed, under the pretence of bringing about an union of the two bodies of Seceders and who, at the same time, if I am not greatly misinformed, transacted a business of much more importance. The result of many a consultation on this subject was, that two commissioners, MESSRS. BRIDGE and POLLOCK, were appointed to make arrangements with the civil Ministers in London. I can also inform my reader, that for *committee and travelling expences*, the round sum of £1130. 15s. 9d. was expended in a short time, and that the expences of a single gentleman commenced at 7s. 7d. advancing gradually to 8s. 8d. 9s. 9d. 11s. 4½d. £1. 11s. 2d. and even to £1. 14s. 10d per diem, exclusive of coach-hire, and charges on the roads. By what authority these gentlemen received this money, out of the Bounty Fund, for their expences, I cannot tell. I never heard any thing about it in Synod, or any where else.

But to return: being admitted as Minister into the Associate Congregation of Killëug, I, of course, became a member of Synod. Notwithstanding, I can say little more than that the business was carried on at interlocutors, or private conferences, expressly at

pointed for other purposes. The affair of the Bounty had not yet come before the Synod. At a certain meeting, however, we were invited, in open Synod, to one of these conferences, by some Burgher Ministers who were so kind as to call upon us. One of our members, wishing to know the subject of conference, said, "I hope, Moderator, this is nothing about the Bounty?" "Oh! no," answered a certain gentleman, "I believe it is about our coalescence, and about a Widow's Fund." When about to dismiss as a Synod, with a view to meet in conference, one of our Ministers very cautiously observed, that "there would be no occasion for the presence of any Elders, as the meeting wholly concerned the Ministers." I did not like this observation very much, yet as I had always earnestly desired a union of the two bodies of Seceders, I went along with the rest into the conversation room. But, to my no small mortification, in less than ten minutes, (for they said a few words about an union,) they fell point blank upon the Bounty. Being thus disappointed, I turned upon my heel, and retired in disgust. How long they continued in conclave, or how far they proceeded in arranging matters about the main thing, or what instructions they prepared for their confidential servants, I never after deigned to inquire.

At length, after many committees, interlocutors, and what nots, of which I can give no account, the

two Synods met in the same place, and at the same time, to wit, in Cookstown, upon the first or second Tuesday of July, 1808. At one of our forenoon sederunts, a message from the Burgher Synod was introduced, desiring an aggregate meeting of the two Synods in the afternoon. This message occasioned a great deal of wondering and conjecturing as to its object. No member seemed to understand what it meant. Some refused their consent to meet the Burghers until a precise object was named. At last, it was agreed that we should go, only some one member should demand the particular subject of discussion, that we might know whether to continue with them, or to retire.

The two Synods met accordingly; the Rev. Professor ROGERS in the chair. One of our number stood up, as had been agreed upon, and observed, that as we had been invited to a conference, we wished to know the object of our meeting. A member remarked, that we had been talking about a coalescence: as this observation did not seem to be savoured by any, solemn silence ensued; every countenance shewed that there was something yet wanting. Another member, coming nearer the point, noticed, that we had been speaking of a Widows' Fund. A third, perceiving the approach of the grand object, instantly, and eagerly replied, "MR. PRESIDENT, we cannot enter upon this, till we know something about another

business connected with it, (to wit, the Bounty,) without which we can do nothing as to the establishing of a Widows' Fund."

Without much farther ceremony, MR. BRIDGE, (the only commissioner present, MR. POLLOCK being detained by sickness), was called on to report his diligence, from whom we learned in substance, that the Bounty would be got, or rather was already secured without any peradventure. It was next inquired, whether it would be with or without terms? To this, MR. BRIDGE answered, that he had no *official authority* to say any thing about terms. This evasive declaration plainly shewed that there certainly were terms, and that these were not likely to give universal satisfaction, else why shift the question by pleading the want of official authority, a thing not at all necessary? In fine, these terms were concealed as long as possible. Here I must in justice observe, that before we parted, the subject of our union underwent discussion for a considerable time, in a very easy and friendly manner; and, I suppose, to the satisfaction of all present. From this till our next meeting, I took notice, that every minister formed that opinion of the commissioner's evasive answer, which best suited his desires or expectations. As for myself, from the moment that the commissioner pronounced these words, "I have no official authority to say any thing about terms," I frankly bade farewell to the Bounty.

Some of my brethren blamed me for giving up hope so soon, adding, that perhaps it might not be so bad as I thought. To this, I replied, that if it came to me as formerly, without any terms or conditions, it would be well; but if not, I had firmly resolved that I would not compliment it with a look over my shoulder; no, nor “cast *one* longing, lingering look behind.”

Nothing farther of importance on this business occurred, till the next meeting of our Synod; at which it came before us as a Synod, for the first time, in its obnoxious form, arrayed in scarlet and purple. Here let the reader observe, that we are now come to that important field, over which our whole Synod, in firm battallion joined, rode in proud triumph, *twice*.

First, at our meeting in Belfast, about the beginning of July, 1809, at the afternoon sederunt, on Wednesday, a member observed, that “there was something of great importance to be brought before the Synod,” but refused to say what it was. A question then arose as to the manner of introducing it. A proposal was made to introduce it by prayer: to this I objected, observing, that to pray without an object would make us ridiculous; and that, if after prayer this *something* should turn out to be improper, we would then be guilty of profaning that sacred institution. Being asked what I would propose, I moved, that the Moderator should leave the chair, and that this wonderfully shy communication be introduced into a com-

mittee of the whole house. This was instantly agreed to. The Moderator left the chair, which being occupied by the Rev. Mr. HOLMES as President, a letter from the Bounty agent was, without farther ceremony, announced. It was agreed in Committee, that this letter should be discussed Synodically. Accordingly, the house being resumed, a letter was read, containing the substance of a plan agreed upon by the commissioners of the two bodies of Seceders, with the ministry in London. At the reading of this letter, we were not a little astonished; and, for some time, felt considerable embarrassment, as to our mode of procedure. The disappointment of some, seemed to suggest a question, as to the strict officiality of this epistle. It was answered, that it must needs be considered as official; and, perhaps, would be found even short of the whole truth, in regard to the terms to be expected. At length, our discussion proceeded on the supposition following:—"If every thing in this paper be found true, can we receive the Royal Bounty on such terms?" The roll was then called, that the members might give their opinions in order. The eldest member then present<sup>1</sup> made a speech of considerable length, in which he reviewed the terms of the letter, showing their inconsistency with Secession principles, and the Christian religion. After speaking

(1) The Rev. Mr. Holmes.



a long time, and to great purpose, he turned about from the Moderator, and thus changing the usual mode of address, spake to us in the following words: "And now, brethren, if you take this money contrary to your consciences, and contrary to your principles, you may live for a while, and enjoy it; but remember that you must die, and appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. Let us, therefore, cast from us this accursed thing, and keep our consciences clean." Whilst pronouncing these last words, he laid his hand upon his breast!

A younger member, and chief speaker in Synod, shut up a very sensible speech, by observing, that "we ought to trust to God our Saviour for our supply;" encouraging us to hope that God would not leave them destitute who put their trust in him; adding, from the xxxiv. Psalm, "The lions young may be hungry, and they may lack their food; but they who trust in the Lord shall not want any good thing." In this manner, we went on condemning the terms offered us, till we came to an unanimous conclusion, that if these should be found to be the agreed on conditions, we could not, in consistency with our principles, receive the Regium Donum.

Our next meeting was appointed to be in Ahoghill, in the month of October following; but whether on the first or second Tuesday I have forgotten.

We met accordingly, about the beginning of Oc-

tober, 1809. At this meeting, a letter was laid before us in full form, and indisputably official, of which the following is a copy :

“ Dublin, 25d September, 1809.

“ Rev. Sir,

“ I have received from Government here, the final determination ; that the classification list was sent so settled and arranged from London, by SIR A. WELLESLEY, LORD LIVERPOOL, and the Ministry in London, with your Commissioners, that the Government here could not now alter it for this year ; but must pursue the plan of classification upon which the Grant was obtained, and which they understood, from your Commissioners, was acquiesced in by the Synods, during their continued applications for the augmentation of the Royal Bounty : but if, on trial, the plan be found attended with any material inconvenience, it will be subject to future consideration and alteration. I have received his Grace the Lord Lieutenant’s instructions to distribute the Bounty, to each Minister of the first class, £70. second class, £50. third class, £40. per annum ;\* (John Mars, Ahoghill, to be paid £50. for this year, out of the surplus ; he will be provided for next session of Parliament ;) and that the payment shall be made half-yearly to each, without any deduction whatever. The present Ministers of the before-named congregations shall be entitled to receive the said sums according to the above arrangement, until the death or removal of each, respectively, and after such death or removal, the same sum shall be paid in like manner to their successors ; provided always, that

\* “ First class, £70. 31 Ministers, *James Longmore, Boordmills.* Second class, £50. 30 Ministers, *Robert Lewers, Clontubril.* Third class, £40. 30 Ministers, *J. Marshal, Coothill.*

such successors shall have been first certified to his Grace the Lord Lieutenant, and approved of by him. His Grace farther directs, that from the surplus which shall remain in the agent's hands each year, after paying their respective salaries to such ministers as shall, according to the above directions, be entitled to the same, said agent shall every year deduct as his own salary, the sum of £200., together with whatever sum he shall have expended during the year, for stamps and postage of letters. He shall next pay, out of the said surplus, the annual sum of £50. sterling for a clerk; and, whatever surplus shall still remain his Grace directs that the same shall annually be paid, without further deduction, into the fund instituted for the benefit of the widows and orphans of the said Presbyterian Ministers of Ireland, distinguished by the name of Seceders; it being his Grace's desire, that whatever sum of money may remain unapplied from temporary vacancies in any of the above congregations, after fulfilling all purposes already mentioned, the said fund shall have the benefit of the same.

“The following is the pro forma memorial of certificate:—

*To his Grace the Duke of Richmond, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.  
The Memorial of                    showeth, that your Memorialist was  
ordained Minister of the Presbyterian Congregation of  
                                          in the                                            and has since taken the  
Oath of Allegiance to his Majesty. He, therefore, humbly  
prays that your Grace will be pleased to issue the necessary  
orders, that he may be placed in receipt of the portion of his  
Majesty's Royal Bounty allotted to the Minister of the afore-  
said congregation.*

[place and date]

A. B. C.

*I Certify the above Memorial.*

*JOHN ROGERS, Jun.*

*Moderator of the Associate Synod of Seceders  
in Ireland.*

*We the undersigned, Magistrates of the County of  
do Certify, that the above-named Memorialist (the Rev.  
                                          ) hath in our presence taken the Oath of  
Allegiance to his Majesty.*

[date here]

[To be signed by two Magistrates.]

“ Each and every Minister will please to draw a Bill on me as heretofore, his individual share as shall be stated as soon as I receive the first payment, which I expect next month.

“ I remain, your humble servant,

“ WILLIAM M'AULEY.

—“ I shall ever endeavour to prove my gratitude and affection to the Government which has appointed me your Agent, and also to you and brethren the ministers of the glorious Gospel, for your work's sake, and expressions of respect and preference to me.— You are requested to communicate this letter to all your Presbytery and Synod. Most fervently wishing you grace, mercy, and peace.”

The above letter had no tendency to remove any difficulties arising from the former, but rather to increase them, and with them our opposition. It confirmed our former decision, and more closely united us in adhering to what we had already done. Our zeal against the Bounty, on the terms proposed, did not appear to have lost any thing since our last meeting in Belfast. Instead of this, our discussions were renewed with additional fury, every one striving who should be most violent in condemning and anathematizing the insults offered to our religious profession. One member in particular, and a chief speaker in Synod,<sup>1</sup> stretching forth his arm over the Precentor's desk, where he sat, and point-

(1) The aforesaid Mr Donnan.

ing with his finger to the letter, as it lay open on our table, exclaimed, "That paper is an insult on the Secession Church." And yet, like a gallant gentleman, he has *pocketed* the insult. The same gentleman, to wit, the Rev. MR. D——N, in a long, sensible, and well-delivered speech, went over the conditions contained in the above official letter, showing their inconsistency with the profession of our faith, observing, that "if we should take the Bounty on these terms offered, and thereby bring the church into bondage, our posterity would rise up and curse our bones when we were in the grave." This speech was received by the members with a burst of applause, and by some hundreds of spectators with an universal murmur of approbation. The printing of it was earnestly insisted upon by many, and as positively refused by its author. A number of members who followed, made speeches equally determined, and more violent, though not so long as MR. D——'s. At length, having exhausted our zeal, and spent our whole stock of oratory, we came to this unanimous conclusion, as formerly, to wit, "That we could not accept of what is called the Royal Bounty, on the terms proposed in the official letter." I have said unanimous, for although the Rev. MR. RENTOUL dissented at this meeting, yet he positively declared, once and again, that his dissent was not founded on the merits of the cause, but on the mode

of procedure. Then, turning about to the spectators, he defied any man to say he was for the Bounty, (to say so would have been unwise at this time;) repeating to them what he had said to us, that his dissent was founded on the manner of proceeding, and nothing more. Whilst the clerk was marking the dissent, the above-mentioned MR. D——N whispered over the desk, yet so as to be heard, “*The man of the little soul!*” I would ask that gentleman, where *now* is “the man of the little soul?” If MR. R——’s soul is not so great as the soul of MR. D——N, he seems at least to have been better acquainted with it, and more consistent in his application of it. Might it not be said to Mr. D——N, and some others, the men of great words,

“For souls they ne’er had any.”

I have mentioned the above circumstance, to show our determined zeal against the Bounty; and that every man who dared in the smallest degree to differ from the harmonious decision of Synod, must instantly be ranked with the ignoble vulgar.

Thus, by two unanimous solemn decisions, first in Belfast, and then in Ahoghill, the business of the Regium Donum seemed to be set at rest; and the Secession Church, by a manly exertion, freed for ever from a dreaded yoke of bondage.

We parted from this meeting in the highest tone

of friendship and harmony; and the people went away delighted, yea, overjoyed, that their ministers had so courageously rejected the gain of oppression, or as we frequently called it, the wages of unrighteousness.

But, alas! how short-lived are all the pleasures of this world! How were all our hopes disappointed, at the very moment of enjoyment! After my return from Ahoghill, I took the first opportunity of publishing to my own congregation, and declaring to every person, as occasion offered, that we had now put the acceptance of the Bounty beyond a peradventure; that it was absolutely impossible for us now to draw back. But just as I was in the height of my triumph in our own victory, and over those who had maintained that the Antiburghers would also take it, I was astonished, confounded, bewildered, and lost in amazement, at a report that a considerable number of my brethren had accepted of, and were now enjoying that which they had formerly, and even so lately, branded with the very appropriate epithets of "the wages of unrighteousness," "the defilement of our consciences," and "the price of our religion." "Can this," said I, "be possible? Have the Seceding Ministers been able so soon to hide themselves from their own decisions? Has their God given them up? Has their Rock sold them? Have my brethren, who so lately overcame, or seemed to have overcome th

world, and exalted themselves on high, so soon  
 ‘fallen, fallen, fallen from that high estate?’”

Fame, who commits so many blunders, was in this instance but too correct in her reports; for by a letter from a particular member of Synod, I plainly perceived that they who should continue to refuse the Bounty, would be found in a very small minority. Although I have no intention of copying all my correspondence into this Narrative, I cannot help giving my reader a short paragraph from the above referred-to epistle, as it exactly falls in with, and proves the truth of what I have already written. It is as follows:

“27th March, 1810.

“Rev. and Dear Brother,

.....“You may assure yourself, that neither MR. D——N nor I go to consult the Synod whether or not we may take the Bounty, as BALAAM, after receiving his ultimatum, still continued to ask counsel of the LORD, if he might take the wages of unrighteousness. Our own Synod, as you say, has solemnly decided on the matter; and the General Associate Synod cannot overturn that decision, if they were inclined to it, until the cause should come before them by an appeal, or reference from the Synod itself.—But we need to be strengthened by the advice of our Scotch brethren, in our present circumstances; for you may assure yourself, that we who are against taking the Bounty on the present terms, will find ourselves in a minority, perhaps a very *small minority*, at the next meeting of Synod. To the eternal disgrace of our part of the Secession Church, the



very men who in Belfast spake against receiving the Bounty, and concurred with their brethren in that unanimous decision, have taken it. This exposes the authority of ecclesiastical courts to the ridicule of the whole world, and may be viewed in much the same light as a selling of the independence of the church for money. If a court of Christ in any case acts wrong, as we are fallible men, it may review its own deed, and reverse it; but it is a thing, I suppose, almost unparalleled in the annals of the church, for a Synod to decide so unanimously and solemnly in public, and then in a few weeks afterwards, that the one half, probably the majority of that Synod, should individually and secretly act against that deed, while it is yet standing as a witness against them, &c.

“ I am yours truly,

“ JOHN NICHOLSON.”

Happy had it been for the writer of the above, had he not gone over to Scotland at this time! I must, however, do the justice to my correspondent, as well as to MR. D——N, and one or two more, to say, that they did not accept of the Bounty until a kind of sympathetic toleration was granted for that purpose by the supreme Synod in Scotland, as will appear by their own minutes following :

“ Edinburgh, 27th April, 1810.

“ The Synod proceeded to the consideration of a reference from the Presbytery of Belfast, for advice concerning the R. D. The brethren from the said Presbytery, viz. MESSRS. NICHOLSON, HUNTER, and DONNAN, were heard; papers were read, and among the rest, a communication by letter, purporting to be from

majority of the members of the Presbytery of Newtownlimavady, met extrajudicially. Afterwards the Synod proceeded to give advice. And it appeared to them, that the terms of the late grant of Royal Bounty were exceptionable, chiefly on two accounts; first, because while the loyalty of the brethren in Ireland is unimpeachable, and we can have no objection to take an oath of subjection to the civil Government of our country, when that oath is duly qualified, and we are regularly called to swear it; yet the enjoyment of this Donation is now for *the first time* with respect to entrants into the ministry made to depend on their taking the oath of allegiance. And, secondly, because these terms include a *system of classification*, which introduces an invidious distinction among Ministers of a Presbyterian Church; is founded upon views of worldly policy, and calculated to beget jealousy and envy. They are also of opinion, that the members of the Synod of Ireland, who had twice voted that the R. D. ought not to be accepted on these terms, would have acted a part, both more consistent with their principles, and more dignified in itself (especially considering the *manner* in which they had been led into their present embarrassing circumstances) had they continued to decline it; while their doing so as a body would have given greater effect to any subsequent application that might be made for a change of arrangement in this matter. At the same time, taking all things into account, especially the very small stipend of several, and the neglect of congregations in providing for the necessary wants of their Ministers, the Synod wish to exercise all tenderness and sympathy toward those who have accepted it. And they take this opportunity of recommending to the people of our connexion in Ireland, to make farther exertions for securing by their own contributions a competent support to their Ministers, lest their want of dutiful attention in this respect, prove a snare to those who are set over them in the Lord. In fine, the Synod would advise their

brethren in Ireland, to adopt some method whereby they may be treated as a distinct body, have their moiety of the general grant thrown into a separate fund, and distributed by a rule more agreeable to Presbyterian principles.

“The Synod also appointed a committee to correspond with their brethren in Ireland, on this interesting subject.”—(*Extracted from minutes of Synod, by JOHN MITCHEL, Clerk, pro tempore.*)

The above decision, or rather clumsy patch-work indecision, is so plain that it needs no particular remarks; he who runs may read, and he who reads will at once see the one half contradicting the other. I shall only call the reader's attention to a few things which might have been mentioned before; but, as the Synod refer to some particulars in the official letter, which they have misunderstood, or else have been misinformed of, I have reserved my remarks on them till now. It is not then strictly true, that the enjoyment of this donation depends upon the oath of allegiance, which, although a requisite in the terms, is not the procuring cause of the Bounty: for a case could easily be supposed, in which a young man, after having sworn himself a loyal subject, for the sake of the money, might meet with disappointment. This, I grant, is a case merely possible; for I do not really think it likely, that ever the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland will exercise the power granted him in the above letter of terms, except in “approving” his humble memorialist. But perhaps the case is more

than *merely* possible. Malice has often obtained the ear of men in power; and when it has, has always done mischief. Besides, it is a solemn transaction sanctioning an encroachment of the civil power upon the liberties of the Church, the most distant appearance of which ought to be well guarded against. The enjoyment of the Bounty then does not depend on the oath of allegiance; but on the Lord Lieutenant's positive approbation, in these words of the letter itself: "Provided always that such successor be first certified to the Lord Lieutenant, and *approved of by him.*" This last expression, "and approved of by him," was always the grand obnoxious clause, particularly to me, who had already resolved that no magistrate, in any station, should ever have it in his power to put either a *positive* or a *negative* on the one half of my income, as a Minister of the Gospel. If, therefore, this *veto* could have been dismissed, the oath of allegiance might have been borne with, as a mere matter of political jealousy; though perhaps not very politely asked of Seceding Ministers, seeing, as the Synod say, "the loyalty of the brethren in Ireland is unimpeachable;" and for which reason they evidently consider the demand of the oath a degrading circumstance. They might also have added, that it was no very honourable thing in a Minister of the Gospel to sell his loyalty for £40. £50. or £70. per year. However, the late disturbances in Ireland, and the sus-

pected interference of many clergymen of other connexions, must plead the excuse of Government in making this demand. Farther, the Synod complain that these terms contain "a system of classification founded upon views of worldly policy." With respect to the classified list, as it is, there can be but one opinion of its absurdity. Here let it be observed, that classification does not strictly and properly consist in the mere difference of the sums, but in the manner of the application, which has a carnal and worldly object in view. For a moment's consideration is sufficient to show to any person of common understanding, that the Bounty never could be equally distributed without a difference in the sums; yet a dishonest parade of the evils of classification was made from the pulpits of many to their people, some years ago, with an evident design to prejudice them against the Synod of Ulster, at the time when they received the Royal Bounty. The necessary distinctions were not made, either then or since, betwixt classification as it was, and as it ought to be, supposing it in any shape lawful; but the loose declamation, and deep-mouthed roar, of some fanatic preachers against it, was a mere blind to cover the real evils which the whole transaction contained. The above remarks were afterwards verified by their practice. Had the Bounty, therefore, (still supposing such a thing lawful,) been classified

according to the situation of the ministers in great cities, large towns, and country places, no man could have reasonably found fault with the scheme. According to such a plan, there would have been only seven or eight ministers in the first class, twelve or fourteen in the second, and the remainder in a third class. By this arrangement the ministers would have been nearly equal in point of value. This, however, is not the case; for some in the country have £70. whilst others, in considerable towns, have only £50. or £40. For example, the Minister of Larne has another congregation in Isle-Magee, to which he passes over every other Sabbath, to the no small danger of his person, and not without some expences; and yet he is very *decently* placed in the third class. If additional labour, and additional danger, be worthy of attention, he certainly ought to have been in the first class. Again, in Dublin there are two congregations, the one Burgher, and the other Anti-burgher; and, whoever the classifiers were, they have made two Bounties of £70. each to the first, and only one of £40. to the last. The arrangement stands thus, as to the first, JOHN POLLOCK, Dublin; then after a number of other names, Mass-lane comes in as a vacancy; yet it is well known to many, that this Mass-lane is nothing else than the name of the street in Dublin in which the Burghers have their meeting-house; but as the authority of the clergy

can make every thing of any thing, and any thing of nothing, it is easy to see how a church can be vacant, and its minister alive. I could have overlooked this piece of provident priestcraft, had any thing like justice been done to the Antiburgher congregation; but to make two £70. to the one congregation, and one £40. to the other, exactly in the same circumstances, deserves the severest remarks.<sup>1</sup>

In fine, the classified list of the Synod of Ulster, though immoral in its nature, has a regularity on the face of it, clearly expressive of the object it has in view; but this Seceding catalogue of names is completely destitute of character; and, unless to those perfectly acquainted with every circumstance, is neither one thing nor another: but to them who know *all the truth*, and who possess any degree of physiognomical talents, it must present the face of an idiot, and the heart of a villain. The whole indeed, is a system of swindling, inconsistent with the very name of religion.

The Scotch minutes farther observe, that by continuing to decline the Bounty, the members of the Synod of Ireland, who had twice voted that it ought

(1) The real design of making two *Seventy Pounds* to the Burgher congregation in Dublin, was to provide a colleague for Mr. POLLOCK, who had got into a delicate state of health. He is since dead. He was truly a pleasant young man, and worthy of any favour consistent with truth and justice.

not to be accepted on these terms, would have acted a part both more consistent with their principles, and more dignified in itself. If then I have continued to decline it, the above observation must be applied to me, and to me only. Aye, but what were MR. BRYCE's motives for continuing to decline the Bounty? A question of motives is a very unfair one; for in such a case I have only to do with Him who searcheth the hearts, and trieth the reins of the children of men. But lest this should seem a begging of the question, I shall not shun the investigation even of motives. One motive ascribed was, that I *wished* to be alone. To this I reply, that I never was in my life so happy in my religious connexion as I was in Ireland, till this accursed business took place; besides, my attachment to, and interest in the Synod of Belfast, is well known to the whole body. If then I *wished* to be parted from them, I must have acted contrary to all ordinary rules among mankind, who usually *wish* to continue happy when they find themselves so. But, to come a little closer to the subject, how could I have the most distant notion of being left alone, after the whole Synod had condemned the Bounty in the solemn and decisive manner, already narrated? Yea, even after the majority had privately accepted, still there were four beside myself; who, by their violent opposition, had every appearance of resisting even unto blood. I appeal then first to the public, is it reasonable or unrea-



sonable to suppose, that I should expect an event, the parallel of which has never occurred since there was a church or a world; and, I am pretty certain, will never occur again; for as this event was solitary, that is, a thing quite by itself, so it is evident that Providence intended a solitary purpose, that is, a purpose which will never happen but once. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding of the signs of the times calculate the purpose and design. I next appeal to the Ministers of the Antiburgher Synod, some of whom at least, will do me the justice to say, that I could not possibly foresee my being left alone; no, I would not have believed all the angels in Heaven, that I should one day be deserted by all my brethren. I always considered the very supposition of such a thing, an almost unpardonable crime, because it supposed that there was no truth in what is commonly believed among Christians, to wit, that God by his word and spirit dwells in man.

Again, others said, MR. BRYCE expected to make more by being alone, than if he had taken the Bounty. To this it is sufficient, at present, to say, that if I could not foresee my being left alone, I could not possibly foresee my profits arising from it? Besides, till some time after the business came to an issue in Ireland, and till after a meeting of the different congregations by their representatives, I knew little or nothing of the real strength of the opposition; and, even of this

meeting I knew nothing but by report. Soon after this meeting, however, I received a formal invitation to attend another meeting in Ahoghill, which I accordingly did; and thus became a kind of ministerial head to the whole. I indeed expected a powerful opposition to the Bounty in the Secession church; but I expected it in connexion with two or three other Ministers at least. As soon, therefore, as I found myself alone, I began to despair, rather than to hope; to look back on iniquity pursuing me at the heels, rather than to look forward to any worldly advantages. One Minister left alone in the midst of a superstitious and priest-ridden world, presented but a dull prospect as to family profits.—But to return, the Scotch Synod complain of the neglect of the Congregations in Ireland, in providing for the necessary wants of their Ministers. This complaint, in many instances, is but too just, as is evident by the want of religious impressions on their minds, in regard of this important subject. The grand object of supporting the Gospel in a Scriptural manner, has not been carefully taught to the people by those who pretend to instruct them. The people, therefore, have not learned this as a first spiritual duty; nay, instead of this, from the long habit of looking up to Government, they have quite forgot the art of looking up to Heaven. This is the true cause of all our evils. The people in general consider their stipend

as a tax on their property, and not as a solemn service to their LORD and SAVIOUR. This sufficiently accounts for the cool calculations of a mercenary clergy, yet forms no excuse for the immorality of their conduct. In fine, it is like priest, like people. With the clergy it is a *living*, with the people a *tax*. Why then should not our Lord Christ give a worldly clergy to a carnal people? The Synod farther claim sympathy for those who have accepted, exhorting the people in Ireland to exert themselves in support of those who are over them in the LORD. This last expression has a very uncouth sound, in connexion with what goes before: men who have cast off all dependence on GOD our SAVIOUR, and yet *over them in the LORD!* And is this all the religious knowledge of the great Associate Synod in Scotland? Do they claim sympathy for men who have acted in avowed contradiction to the express ordination of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who hath ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live, not *by* the Gospel, but *of* the Gospel, even as the priests were partakers with the altar? That is, every devoted thing in Israel was theirs. They dared not to receive a gift from prince or peasant; but whatever the prince or the people devoted, was laid upon the altar of JEHOVAH, and then, and not till then, it became the priest's. Besides, the priesthood of Egypt, the first sacred order that ever was in the world, was support-

ed by the civil power—And why? Because the God before whom they served, being only a young bull, could not supply their *necessary wants*, therefore they had a portion of PHARAOH. But the priests of the God of Israel had no inheritance in the land of Canaan, because JEHOVAH was their inheritance, as he said unto them. Shall we then liken JEHOVAH our God, to the bull-god of Egypt! Let the God, whom we serve in the gospel of his grace, support us; for that must always be a false religion, in which the God who is worshipped is not able to maintain them who serve at his altar. But the LORD our God is a jealous God, therefore he hath expressly forbidden, not only *foreign* powers, but even his own people Israel, in their national capacity, to assist him in supporting his own priests. Would Christians then, king or subject, ruler or ruled, conscientiously and religiously devote of their substance to the LORD, there would at all times be a sufficient supply for them who minister in holy things. If, therefore, the people on the one hand, have in a great measure forgotten the commandment of the LORD JESUS; the clergy, on the other hand, have made void his ordination, by negotiating a political treaty with the state, instead of resting upon and pleading his covenant of promise.

It will only be bare justice on this subject, to compare a little the conduct of the Catholic Clergy of

Ireland with that of the Seceding Ministers. These last courted, cringed, scraped and bowed, and were finally successful, but upon terms disgraceful to their own church, and subversive of their principles as Seceders, according to their own opinion, and the opinion of the Synod in Scotland. The Catholic Clergy, however, had the Bounty offered them, which they virtuously and manfully refused. As a proof of this, I shall quote the prime minister CASTLEREAGH'S OWN WORDS, in his speech at the opening of the budget: "They," the Roman Catholic Bishops, "acknowledged that a moderate provision from the State, such as had been extended to the Presbyterian Clergy in Ireland, and to the Roman Catholic Clergy in Scotland, would contribute much to the comfort and respectability of their Clergy; yet they always displayed an unaffected and disinterested reluctance to receive exclusive benefits, which might have the appearance of separating their interests from those of the laity, and thereby impair their means of discharging with effect their sacred functions." The above I have copied from the speech of the minister, as reported in a newspaper. Let the Scotch Synod read over the quotation three or four times, till they blush for the conduct of their reverend brethren in Ireland. It is true, the Catholic Clergy are not under the same temptations to be *worldly*; for, in the first place, they have no families; and, in the second

place, the Catholic people are very attentive to supply the *necessary wants of their Ministers*.

The Synod conclude, by advising the brethren in Ireland to “adopt some method whereby they may be treated as a distinct body, have their moiety of the general grant thrown into a separate fund, and distributed by a rule more agreeable to Presbyterian principles.” This advice appears still to have a more direct reference to the difference of the sums, than to the carnal policy of the arrangement. They surely do not mean that each minister should have an equal share of the Bounty. This at least would not be consistent with Presbyterian practice. Have not the Scotch Seceding Ministers, in general, from £300. to £200., and from that to £100. per year, according as they are planted in large towns, or in the country villages? And is not £100. in the latter situations reckoned equal to £300. in Glasgow or Edinburgh? Is not £40. to a country parson in Ireland, every farthing as valuable as £70. or even £100. to a clergyman in Dublin or Belfast? But did the brethren in Ireland follow the advice of their superiors in Scotland, in their concluding recommendation? Yes, in the flight of a moment, they entered into something like an agreement, which was almost as suddenly rendered ineffectual, by the retracting of some who at first had given a kind of awkward consent.

The above minutes having reached this country,

produced a considerable agitation in the minds of all concerned; and the meeting of our Synod in Cookstown was looked forward to with no small degree of anxiety. Discussions, in the mean time, were going on among the people, in regard to the conduct of the two members who had gone to Scotland, with a view to support the above-mentioned solemn decisions of the Synod in Ireland; and who had received considerable sums from different congregations for that purpose; concerning whom it was also known that they had already Bishop-Sharped the money and the cause. The conduct of these individuals, and the more than probable issue of the business, did not prevent some congregations from applying to the Synod in the usual form, requesting them to persevere in their former resolutions of rejecting the Bounty, as a Synod.

On the 3d of July, 1810, the Synod met in Cookstown. Among other overtures, one, reduplicating upon the above minutes from Scotland, was brought in; and although this overture was number three, or four, I do not exactly recollect which, some proposed that it should be first taken into consideration. Perceiving the impatience of members to get at the main chance, I insisted that the overtures should be discussed in their order. This proposal was over-ruled by a member, who observed that the order one, two, three, &c. was merely an arrangement of the Com-

mittee for their own direction, and that the Synod had a right to choose any overture which they might think most suitable for discussion. From this it was plain, that they were resolved to bear down at once upon the grand object. The Synod proceeded accordingly, and after some conversation, agreed to act on the advice of the General Synod contained in their minutes, as above given to the reader.

As soon then as it was agreed to proceed in this manner, (quite overlooking, and hereby overthrowing our own solemn decisions in Belfast and Ahoghill,) I went forward and protested. It is necessary here to observe, that some time before this, it was agreed upon in our congregation, that if the Scotch minutes were to be acted upon, the Elder and I should protest and withdraw, because any procedure on the above minutes would be an express condemnation of all that we had already done; and because an appeal to a Synod which had already broken the bands of our union as a church, would be needless, as it was inconsistent. Instead, then, of following the advice from Scotland, had any of my brethren proposed to revise our own decisions, even with a view to reverse them, if found wrong, I could not reasonably have refused my consent; yea, would have gone along with them to the very point of reversion. I had however resolved that I would not take a single step on the new and unhallowed ground, which had been



purchased at the expense of every thing sacred. Besides protesting, I appealed to the Synod in Scotland; in doing which, I indeed acted contrary to the minds of my own people, who had allowed me only to protest and withdraw, as above stated. At this appeal, they showed their displeasure, by refusing me any assistance in my journey to Scotland; and when I returned, some of them even refused to welcome me home, though I dare say they were pleased enough to see me again in Erin. The reason of this treatment was their opinion, as already stated, that the appeal was not only needless, but extremely improper, seeing the Synod had, in the most bare-faced manner, encouraged a number of the Irish Ministers in their schismatical courses; that is, in disregarding and trampling upon, in the most wanton manner, the two solemn decisions of their own body; especially, after that very Synod had declared that these very Ministers would have acted a part, both more becoming their principles, and more dignified in itself, had they declined the acceptance of the Regium Donum. My reasons for adding an appeal to the protest were, first, to prevent any suspicion that I intended taking the advantage of my present situation, a circumstance which I foresaw would be grasped at as a handle to my disadvantage, but of which my congregation and session were not aware. Secondly, I still indulged a secret hope of victory, supposing that the Synod

in Scotland would not venture to act in contradiction to those principles which had cost them so many years to manufacture, and which they had so lately published in triumph to the world. Even this last glimmering of hope was disappointed, as will appear by what follows.

The General Associate Synod (as they call themselves) met at Edinburgh, on Tuesday, 30th of April, 1811. Our cause was opened in the usual form. All papers introductory to the business were read. The commissioners on both sides were heard patiently, and at great length. Those on the opposite side were, REV. MR. NICHOLSON, THOMAS WHINNERY *Elder*, and WILLIAM GORDON; and our side were, ROBERT TENNENT, JOHN BARNETT, *Sen.* DAVID RAPHAEL, and JAMES BRYCE, *Minister*. By these commissioners, papers were presented from their respective congregations. The cause being fully opened, the Synod at first appeared somewhat confused, and uncertain how to proceed. They craved time to think on the subject; and, after pledging themselves to take up the business on Friday, obtained it. During this interval, the object was to know the real strength of the opposition to the terms of the Regium Donum in the North of Ireland. Whilst, then, the members of Synod are forming their different opinions, I shall fill up this space of two days by presenting to the reader a copy of my reasons of Protest

and Appeal. These are few, and expressed in few words, being intended merely as an introduction of the cause into the Synod, who always wish that every paper brought before them should be as short as possible. Besides, if any thing should appear incorrect or defective, let it be remembered, that these reasons were written only once; I did not put pen to paper a second time, not even to correct a word, or alter a letter. If any thing, therefore, appear to be wanting, it is hoped that the statement of the cause at large will supply the defect.

#### “ PROTEST AND APPEAL.

“ The Associated (Antiburgher) Synod in Ireland, having agreed to act on the advice of the General Synod, dated Edinburgh, April 27th, 1810, with regard to the R. D., I, JAMES-BRYCE, Minister of the Associated Congregation of Killéug, do, in my own name, and in the name of WILLIAM BAIRD, Elder in said Congregation of Killéug, adhering to me, protest against said decision of the Associate Synod, and do appeal to the first meeting of the General Associated Synod at Edinburgh, on the last Tuesday of April, 1811, for the following reasons:

“ First, Because an advice which regardeth the whole body ought to have been obtained by a reference from the whole body, and not by any application from a single Presbytery; which, in our opinion, is an encroachment on the order of a Presbyterian church.

“ Second, Because the advice is a virtual and implicit condemnation of two deliberate and solemn decisions of our Synod in Ireland; we having declared the terms of the Grant of R. D. con-

trary to religion, and to every principle of the Secession church. Notwithstanding, the General Synod has only designed these terms 'exceptionable:' they have also pleaded tenderness and sympathy for men who have violated the very life and essence of Presbytery, besides breaking through every moral obligation.

"Third, Because in obtaining said advice, the Commissioners from Belfast Presbytery have not fully informed the General Synod as to the terms of R. D. and thereby have allowed them to express the following sentence, viz. 'That this Donation with respect to entrants into the Ministry is made to depend on their taking the oath of allegiance;' which assertion is not a *fact*.

"Fourth, We do protest against following the advice, because we are enemies to the R. D. in every shape and form. 1st, Because this R. D. has been the real cause of 'the very small stipend of several, and the neglect of other Congregations, in providing for the necessary wants of Ministers.' 2d, Because a regular yearly pension from any Government whatever, forms a real and permanent connection with that Government, whilst such yearly pay, or pension, shall continue to be officially received by Ministers of the Gospel.

"For these reasons, we have opposed and protested against 'adopting any method, whereby we may be treated as a distinct body,' &c. hoping the General Synod will not only see meet to alter their advice; but, by their superior authority, absolutely forbid us to have any thing to do with *that* which has already broken, divided, and scattered so many Christian congregations."

These reasons were read; to which answers were given in, read, and approved of by the Synod, as the foretaste of what we were to expect in the issue. Men may do what they please, physically speaking,

but it was morally impossible, in the circumstances in which we then were, to answer these reasons. The very gentleman who gave in the answers, and who had a chief hand in writing them, confessed before the Synod, at that very time, that they were of the same judgment about the Bounty as formerly. How then answer my objections, and yet be of the same opinion with me? To my fourth reason, something like an answer was given. It was said, that I had taken the old Bounty; but that now I had pledged myself against all Bounty, either with or without terms. On this I remark, that had the *new Grant* come to me as the old came, that is, as a matter of mere Bounty, I certainly would have received it, as I had done the former; but this shameful adulterous transaction with the Government, opened my eyes to see the evils of, and the danger arising from a Bounty, even without terms. It must be plain to every careful observer, that the one naturally leads to the other. Every pension, not purchased by long and many services to a man's country, is nothing else than a bribe. On this subject, a noble Scotch writer has made the following judicious remark: "Men formerly were so blind, as not to see, that a pension creates a bias in a Minister against his master, and his country. At present, men are so quick-sighted, as clearly to see, that a foreign pension to a minister is no better than a bribe; and it would be held so by all the

world." I was, I confess, one of LORD KAIMES' blind men. I did not see the old Bounty leading us, not into a new Bounty, but into a legal establishment.—But let us return to the Synod.

On Friday 3d, the Synod relieved their pledge, by resuming the consideration of our case; and finding, as they supposed, that only a few adhered stiffly to the two decisions of Synod against the Bounty, they soon cast off all uneasiness about the event, and even all restraint, as to outward decorum, in their conduct: for instead of treating the subject seriously, as it deserved, and as we expected, many of them turned both it and us into ridicule, or, in Scripture language, laughed the whole to scorn. There were, however, still a few, who continued serious throughout the discussion, and who also opposed the plan of procedure, as expressed in the minutes underwritten, especially PROFESSOR PAXTON,<sup>1</sup> who insisted for a decision, either *pro* or *con.* and to leave the event to Providence. A decision, however, such as the one proposed, did not answer their intention, which plainly was, to keep the great body of Seceders in Ireland under subjection to the Synod in Scotland; a project at once unreasonable, unscriptural, and un-

(1) There were also a few others equally earnest in the business, some of whose names I still recollect; but as I cannot remember them all, shall not therefore mention any.

just. Therefore, maugre all remonstrance, the following *things* were thrown together upon paper—the reader may call them by what name he pleases :

“ Edinburgh, 5d May, 1811.

“ That though the Synod do not consider the acceptance of the Regium Donum, in all circumstances, as unlawful, yet they cannot approve of receiving it on the terms specified on the late grant. But, as every thing which may be exceptionable, ought not forthwith to be made a term of communion, so the Synod judge, in present circumstances, the acceptance or non-acceptance of the Donum, ought not to be viewed in this light ; and they cannot help expressing their disapprobation of the conduct of those who have on this account withdrawn from the dispensation of divine ordinances in their respective congregations ; and enjoin such persons to return to their duty, and exercise forbearance with their Ministers and brethren in this matter, and in doing so, no Session shall exclude them from church privileges, for past irregularities in this affair. As, however, the acceptance of the Donum has proved a stumbling-block to many church members, the Synod judge, in order to remove it, that no Presbytery in Ireland ought in future to grant a moderation, without being satisfied that the sums offered by the congregations, are adequate to the support of a Gospel Ministry, according to their respective situations, independent of any such aid ; and recommend it to the several congregations already settled, to take immediate steps for the purpose of increasing the stipend of their Ministers, that they may, as soon as possible, have no further occasion for the assistance ; and that when the respective Presbyteries are satisfied with the support given, that they shall be bound to relinquish all interest in the Regium Donum,” (*Extracted by D. BLACK, Synod Clerk.*)

I shall make no particular remarks on the foregoing, till I also lay before my reader the following paper, which concludes the official documents on this part of the subject.

“Edinburgh, May 3d, 1811.

“The Synod proceeded to consider the accusations against MR. BRYCE, as contained in the papers on the Synod’s table, and particularly in the petition from Lyle-hill, which was read. MR. BRYCE was heard; and after some reasoning, MR. BRYCE was interrogated, Whether, after what he had heard in Synod, he was now ready to acknowledge the irregularity of his conduct in the matters alleged against him, and his sorrow for it? MR. BRYCE answered in the negative. Interrogated, Will you in your practice acquiesce in the decision of this Synod, respecting the Regium Donum? MR. BRYCE also answered in the negative. After farther deliberation, the following motion was made, That although the Synod were willing to have extended to MR. BRYCE the benefit of their decision relative to the Regium Donum, had he agreed to follow up in his practice the said decision, and professed his sorrow for his schismatical courses, yet in being called to the bar of the court, he had absolutely refused to do so. The Synod, therefore, find themselves shut up to suspend him from his office, till next meeting of Synod. This motion being reasoned upon, a brother was employed in prayer, and the vote was stated, ‘suspend or not,’ and the roll being called and the vote<sub>s</sub> being marked, it was carried *nem. con.* suspend the said MR. JAMES BRYCE, from all and every exercise of the ministerial office, until their next meeting. The above was intimated to him by the Moderator, and he cited *apud acta* to attend next meeting.”

(Extracted by D. BLACK, Associate Synod Clerk.)

A true Copy, GEORGE M’CAUGHEY.



With regard to the accusations brought against me in this paper, they amount in general to this, that I had been the means of dividing certain congregations, by preaching to them and baptizing their children ; or, as one of the papers expressed it, at least of preventing a re-union of these congregations. These round and sweeping charges, I am prepared to say, are notoriously false ; I say *notoriously*, for the very persons who gave in the accusations, knew that they were false. That I have been preaching and baptizing children in Ireland, now for thirteen years, is true ; but that I ever, by preaching or baptizing, have been the means of dividing congregations, is positively untrue. The congregations here referred to, had left their former connexions three or four months before they knew any thing about me—how could I then divide them? Besides, I was not the first applied to, as will appear by the following quotation from an official letter.

“ ——— 9th January, 1810.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I am sorry that we cannot supply you with preaching at present ; for we are destitute of probationers : and settled Ministers are now obliged to be at their post,” &c.

These few lines show what would have been done, had *certain gentlemen stood to their post*.<sup>1</sup>

(1) The above happened about four months before I was called to preach any where.

But still, had it not been for Mr. B. perhaps the people would have returned :

“ Perhaps they might, then *all* was lost,  
Had I likewise flinched from my post.”

Some afterwards did return, and again submit to the ministry of those whom they had branded with the name of *hireling* ; yet the better part had resolved that they never would return, but would wait patiently on the disposals of kind Providence, believing that if they had acted right, the Great Shepherd of the sheep would send them pastors according to his own mind ; and if wrong, that He would defeat their designs ; and the sooner, said they, the better. I confess, that many at first left their Ministers from improper motives, or even without any motive, crying “ Great is Diana of the Ephesians,” just because they heard others crying it : most of these, however, either returned back, or joined themselves to such other connexions, as were equally bad, and in some instances, worse than their former. But to return, I never did minister within the bounds of any settled congregations, in any other sense than all Seceding Ministers in Scotland and Ireland have ever done. Were not the first seceding ministers charged, as I am, with schismatical courses, because they preached to the people throughout the kingdom, and gathered congregations from the established church ? And who can blame me if I make the best of my own cause ? Have not all who have gone before me done the same ? But here again I must appeal to the impartial

public, who are schismatics, and who are separatists? For, though the Synod of Belfast, by two solemn unanimous decisions, condemned the terms of the Bounty, notwithstanding the greater part of the Ministers went away privately and accepted of it, (which practice is expressly disapproved of by the Scotch Synod) leaving me and a few others standing on the firm foundation of Synodical authority. At last, these few left me alone. Have I, therefore, separated from the Synod, because I never moved a foot from Synodical ground? Am I a schismatic, because I have stood to my post, and kept the colours flying, when all others showed the coward's back? Yes, cowards,

“ Yon trembling cowards who forsook their Master.”

Who dare not to face poverty for their religion, nor suffer want for the hope of a better resurrection. But did not these very men, once and again, declare that rather than accept of the money on these disgraceful terms, they would dig, and when they could no longer dig, they would beg! Yes, they said so; and their words were good, but their hearts were not sincere, for when the hour of trial came, they could not hold out. What can we do? said they,—we cannot starve! No, truly! did believers never starve, nor ever lay down their lives for their religion? The man who really believes the Gospel, can starve for it, but cannot barter it for *forty thousand* a year. But, let us hear the experience of God's people in ages

past, on this important subject, who could not only suffer for the Gospel, but, like their Saviour, could conquer in suffering. "For I am persuaded, that neither famine, nor nakedness, nor death, nor life, nor principalities, nor powers, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

I, then, have not been guilty of schismatical courses, but the Synod in Scotland has been guilty of the most despicable and unmanly truckling with the Ministers in Ireland; and, because I would not promise to follow up in my practice their mean, dirty scheme, to wit, of retaining the corrupting bribe in my one hand, till the other should be filled with stipends, and then throwing it from me; as also of professing my sorrow for my *schismatical courses*, that is, for standing fast to the decisions of our own Synod, and acting a more dignified part, (these are their own words) I must be punished with a four month's ecclesiastical imprisonment. But surely, I ought not to call that a punishment, which in truth was, and ever will be, the certificate of a well fought battle, and complete victory over the beast, and over the number of his name.<sup>1</sup> My sus-

(1) This beast with the seven heads and ten horns upon which the woman sat, is evidently the ten kingdoms of the western empire, supporting Christianity. This connexion between church and state is called Babylon, or spiritual adultery; in other words, all churches, receiving legal support from the civil power, are, in the

pension by the Scotch Synod, therefore, was a proof to my constituents in Ireland, that I had not yielded in any thing to a time-serving clergy in Scotland, in connexion with a batch of hungry pensioned hirelings in Ireland. The advantage to be derived by me from this suspension, was so evident to the Rev. Commissioner from the clergy in this country, that he pleaded strongly at the bar of the Scotch Synod, that I should not be suspended; insisting, that if the Synod should suspend Mr. BRYCE, it would be doing him a particular favour, whilst it would give the people in the North of Ireland a very unfavourable idea of the Synod in Scotland. Perhaps there might be an additional consideration why the Rev. gentleman spoke as above. He had begun his speech before the Synod on a former day, nearly in the following words: "Moderator, I do not appear in this place to justify the conditions of the *Regium Donum*;" confessing, that it could not be de-

language of prophecy, committing fornication with the kings of the earth. Our LORD CHRIST has pledged himself in the marriage covenant to support his own spouse. Suppose any other man to supply my wife with food and raiment from year to year, would not every person consider himself justified in calling me *cuckold*. So, if the spouse of CHRIST receive her support from the kingdoms of the world, is not this to commit fornication against her Lord? I am aware, that promises, and examples pretended to be Scripture, will be opposed to me. Of these, I have only time at present, to say, that they are notorious forgeries of interested craftsmen. The passages in question have not only been misunderstood, and misinterpreted, but even mis-read. This I hope to shew at another time.

nied, that we had twice condemned the Bounty on the terms offered ; and that he would not now either deny or retract any thing he had formerly said, or any thing that had been agreed on in the Synod of Belfast: with other concessions to the same purpose. Now, every person acquainted with Mr. N.'s mild disposition, will very readily suppose, that his mind would be hurt at the very naming of my suspension ; as this would naturally appear a punishing of me for the faults of others. Besides, he plainly saw, that to suspend Mr. B. was not the plan to heal the disease in Ireland. But some of the leaders, or rather drivers in the Synod, were resolved, as one of the members whispered to me, to have their nails in my flesh ; no remonstrance therefore could prevail. They could not avoid it, because Providence was also resolved, that I should have a full certificate from the Synod itself, of my stedfast opposition to the wages of unrighteousness, as the Seceding Ministers of Ireland used to call the Royal Bounty. Farther, let it be observed, that my suspension was limited to a given time, which was until their next meeting, or as expressed by the Moderator when he intimated the sentence, till August, when the next meeting was understood to take place. Therefore, from August 1811, I am no longer under suspension. They could not renew the sentence against me, seeing all the clergy in Ireland had become equally guilty in refusing to follow up in their practice the above paper agreement, to

wit, that every young man to be ordained should have a competency provided by the Presbytery, that they might be independent of government aid; and that settled congregations should increase the stipends of their Ministers, that as soon as possible they might have no occasion for the assistance of Government. To this plan, the Irish Synod, by their commissioners at the bar, bowed consent. They said, We go, Sir; but went not; for, as far as I have heard, they have never since taken a single step to follow up the injunction of the Synod.<sup>1</sup> Unless, then, they suspend all the Ministers in this country, they cannot proceed any farther against me. These things I mention merely as matters of historical fact, and not that I regard their censures. They may suspend me for 50 years, if they please, or even depose me. I am for ever beyond the reach of their malice.

Before leaving these minutes, I must make three remarks on the following expression in them, "Votes marked—it was carried *nem. con.*—suspend," &c. First, *nem. con.* which written full, is *nemine contradicente*, means no one speaking against it; the expression then, "it was carried *nem. con.*" is a falsehood; for MR. NICHOLSON, in his mild way, strongly opposed the suspension: besides, a considerable number voted against

(1) If I have not forgot, a proposal was made in the congregation of B——, to act up to the minutes of Synod of May 3d, 1811, but was either plainly refused, or treated with silent contempt.

it, so that it could not be carried *nem. con.* Second, remark that *nem. con.* after a vote is absurd, seeing the very idea of a vote supposes some person giving opposition. To say, therefore, that a business was carried by vote *nem. con.* is as much as to say, that it was carried by a vote without a vote. The expression in the minutes is a downright bull ; but whether it be a Scottish bull or an Irish bull, I shall not take upon me to determine. The minutes before me are indeed only a copy of the Scotch, by the clerk of Templepatrick and Ahoghill Presbytery. He says it is a true copy. This I shall not controvert; for although the Scotch clerk be well known for his correctness, yet even such a man may be carried by custom, just as a vote may be carried *nem. con.* Third, some of the Scotch worthies who suffered during the persecution in that country, left their dying testimony against voting in church courts ; and, indeed the usual manner of conducting a vote through all its stages, is nothing less than an affront offered to the Throne of Grace, and a gross profanation of that glorious name by which we are called.

No sooner were my tossings and troubles at an end, for having rejected the Bounty, than I must undergo a new persecution by the scourge of the tongue. From Dublin a letter was sent to a certain Rev. gentleman in Belfast, informing him, from the *best authority*, that I either directly or indirectly was receiving the Bounty, adding “ would it not be advisable to submit it to



the Synod, and have the Agent informed officially not to pay it to him in future." Along with this information, many handsome remarks were made, abundantly worthy of the enlightened mind of their polite author. A copy of this elegant epistle was procured with ease from the gentleman to whom it was sent (for my friend could not think of robbing him of the precious original.) By the writer's *best authority*, he must have meant the Agent, with whom, from his confident way of talking, one would think he was very intimate. The letter was dated June 27, 1811. About four weeks after this date, being in the neighbourhood of Belfast preaching, where the report of my having taken the Bounty was perplexing my friends not a little, I procured a copy of the above letter, and returned home with the valuable document in my pocket; valuable, on account of the following curious circumstance; without which it would have been absolutely beneath either my notice, or the attention of my reader. On my return, then, the first thing that met me when I entered my room, was a letter from the Agent. Here, it will naturally be expected, that, seeing I had been receiving the money clandestinely, if the above letter be correct, this from the Agent was the fruits of the young gentleman's zeal in the cause of his church; and that now I must be *informed officially* not to draw for any more Bounty. But, that I may not tease my

reader with remarks, I shall lay before him the Agent's letter, and allow him to remark for himself.

" Dublin, 31st July, 1811.

" Rev. Sir,

" There lies in the Bank, Bounty, which I was ordered by Government to pay you as Minister of the congregation of Aughadowie, from 29th March, 1809, to 25th of March, 1811, £76. Be pleased to inform me by return of post, whether you will draw upon me for it, or *refuse it*, that, in case of your refusal, I may lay it before Government, and dispose of it in the manner Government may order me to do. I wait for your determination with anxiety, as said sum, and all the subsequent Bounty of £40. per annum, to your successors and congregation must now be disposed of. If you don't think it proper to use this Bounty, may it not be advisable that you draw for it, and give it to some religious or charitable institution, or give a power of attorney to some person to receive and apply it in that way, during your connexion with your congregation? Wishing you divine illumination and direction,

" I remain, Reverend Sir,

" Your most obedient servant,

" WM. M'AULEY,

" No. 10, George's Quay."

To this very kind and official communication, I sent the following reply.

" Killëug, August 17th, 1811.

" Dear Sir,

" I was from home, when your letter arrived here; I now write as soon as possible, to inform you, that whilst the money referred to continued to be Bounty, I willingly and thankfully received it; but since, by a paper transaction between our Church and the Government, it has, in my opinion, been

converted into a legal stipend, I have resolved to *refuse it*. Besides, the Synod with which I am connected, has unanimously, and twice solemnly condemned it, on the terms offered, as inconsistent with Secession principles. Whilst, therefore, this sentence stands unrevised and unreversed, I cannot accept, without making shipwreck of a good conscience. With regard to my successor, I need to use no precaution, as our congregation is resolved to a man, that they never will have any Bounty on such terms. Were I to draw the money, according to your advice, and apply it to some religious purpose, I could not apply it to a more needful religious purpose, than to my own support as a Minister of the Gospel; but how could I apply that to any religious purpose, which, in my judgment, is contrary to the very first principles of the Christian religion? As you have been so kind as to advise me, I shall return my advice to you, "that the money be converted into a sinking fund for the use of the Government." This I give only as advice. I disclaim all connexion with it, or interest in it: so you are left at perfect freedom for me, to restore it to Government, that they may dispose of it as they shall think proper.

"JAMES BRYCE."

For three years after this, I enjoyed tolerable quietness; yet I must not be allowed to fall asleep. A new report, therefore, on the old subject, was set afloat, about the beginning of July, 1814, at which I was not a little astonished. It appeared, however, afterwards, in the course of Providence, that this new reproach was necessary to clear the lurking impressions of the former, which, though out of date a little, was not altogether done away. Accordingly, Fame once more spread her wing; and now it appeared beyond a doubt, that Mr.

BRYCE had taken the Bounty, for some Ministers, who had been at a Synod, had said it. Many believed it; some would have sworn it. To myself, the origin of such a report was not only unknown, but appeared a perfect mystery. Notwithstanding, I must confess, that I felt considerable uneasiness, sensible with how much eagerness the gaping vulgar (for no man of judgment ever believed a thing so unreasonable) swallow down, and with how much confidence they proclaim the most palpable absurdities. Some of my own congregation were so weak, as to desire me to contradict this slander from the pulpit on the Sabbath evening; but the elders opposed any such thing, enjoining every member of the congregation to treat the report with sovereign contempt, and the reporters with profound silence. The creatures themselves, who were so busy in spreading this report, did not believe it, for they knew the origin of it; yet sacrificed truth and character, that they might enjoy a short-lived malicious pleasure in my momentary reproach; yea, rather than I should not be reproached, some silly creatures among the clergy have descended to the grossest, most indecent, and even disgusting vulgarity. But to go on, I bore this insult upon my integrity, with considerable patience, till next year, when I was for ever delivered from it by the Agent himself, who, in his turn, had been accused with mismanagement of the public money; and who, in his own defence, was obliged to publish a small

pamphlet, which is now lying before me, of which the title page is as follows:—

“ *William M'Auley's Defence against the charges of the Rev. John Bridge, at an Interlocutor held in Cookstown, 6th July, 1814. A Committee consisting of Messrs. Hay; Edgar, sen.; Boyle; Hunter; and Main Reid, were appointed to investigate his accounts, to meet in Mr. Henry's, at eleven o'clock at night. Dublin: printed by L. Tute, 15, Parliament-street, 1815.*”

From this defence, I shall only copy what refers to the case in hand. The charges are eight in number.

*Charge fourth, (against the Agent.)*

“ That although it is known that Mr. BRYCE refused to accept the Royal Bounty, the sum of £20. is twice added to his name in MR. M'AULEY'S lists; and he is, therefore, called upon to account for said sums.”

*Answer to charge fourth (by Agent.)*

“ The Agent charged for four gales of Bounty as if paid to MR. BRYCE, amount £76. which he reserved for acceptance by MR. BRYCE; he reserved Bounty in like manner for several others, who afterwards drew for it. When MR. BRYCE decisively rejected it, the Agent placed it to the credit of the account for the fund for widows and orphans, on the 7th of November, 1811, £76. as appears by the accounts furnished to all the clerks of Presbyteries.”

According to the manner in which the foregoing charge is worded, the imputation of guilt falls more naturally on the Agent than on me. Why, then, was a reproach so confidently spread abroad, by those who were well acquainted with the foregoing circumstance? Had there been only this one charge, it would have been more reasonable, I confess, to have suspected me of receiving, than the Agent of embezzling the public money; but in such a load of suspicious circumstances, why should not the fourth charge fall on him also? This was well known to the reporters, yet they kept the real truth in the back ground, that they might bring forward, with greater advantage, their mischievous rumour, and display in front the naughtiness of their dishonest and deceitful hearts. But why should I either detain my reader, or re-irritate my own mind, by things that are past, and things which can no more do me harm? I shall, therefore, conclude, by remarking how divine Providence hath made all things work together, until a printed testimony from the Agent himself, has delivered me from an unmerciful slander, and brought forth my righteousness as the noon tide of the day.

If then my former religious connexions have made me poor, by robbing me, as I may say, of £40. a year, they have made me rich in reproach, and I hope I shall always esteem the reproach of CHRIST greater

riches, than the treasures in Egypt, having respect to the recompence of reward.

I shall now give a short account of the churches of our Association. These are seven in number. The one which naturally occupies the first place, is the Associate Congregation of Killëug, parish of Aughadowie, county of Londonderry, and district of Colerain. In this congregation, I may say, I have ministered since my coming to Ireland, about 13 years ago; for, although, I was two years in the country before my instalment, yet, during that period, they still considered me as the Minister whom Providence had evidently marked out for them. Some of the leading people of this congregation, when the business of the Bounty began to occupy our attention, so far from encouraging me in opposing it, desired me not to say any thing hard or severe against it; for, if it came on any terms within the bounds of reason, I most certainly should take it. This declaration gave me considerable uneasiness, as to the issue; that is, lest the terms might be such, that one could not reasonably refuse them, or decently accept them. As soon, however, as the long paper transaction, containing the terms, was made known, they immediately, and decidedly, turned against it. The conditions, indeed, appeared to them, so unlike to the very outside of religion, that they never, for a moment, hesitated as to the line of conduct they ought to pursue. Farther, it is the desire of the other

congregations, that public notice should be taken of the generosity of this congregation, in allowing them, not only the stated supply of every third Sabbath, but also occasional assistance, as their circumstances required.

Second congregation, Knockcloughgorm, near Maghera. This congregation deservedly holds the second place, as having been in connexion with Killëug, for many years; that is, almost since my coming to Ireland; and also, having depended on us for supply more than on any other. This congregation, which is, in point of size, our third, possesses a meeting-house and small park, making a free property of considerable value. The members, in general, are respectable, quiet, industrious, and, I hope, religious.

Third congregation, meets usually at Craigmore, near Randalstown. This society had left their former place of worship, and had, determinedly, kept together for three months, without knowing that there was any Minister in Ireland, who had not taken the Bounty. In this solitary situation, they heard of another society in the neighbourhood of Ahoghill, which, like them, had been deserted by the hireling shepherd. Thither they sent one of their number, to consult with a member of that body, how they should manage, seeing all the clergy, had, (as they thought), forsaken them. The sad tale being told by Mr. M. an answer was returned by Mr. R. in nearly the following



words: "Oh, no! there are some yet, who have not taken the Bounty, and, I hope, never will." "These," said Mr. M. "must be some of your Ministers, for all our lads have accepted." After some farther conversation, Mr. R. informed Mr. M. that MR. BRYCE was to preach at Knockcloughgorm, on Sabbath first, two weeks. A consultation immediately ensued, as to the manner of an application for preaching.

In fine, it was agreed, that the two brethren should attend, at the above place, on the day named. They attended accordingly, and, after sermon, a joint application was made to me, which I positively refused; telling them that, they must apply to our session and congregation, without whose consent I could do nothing in a business of the kind. They met again with me, next morning, in my lodgings, and drew up a written application, which, at their request, I carried home with me, and presented to the session next Lord's day. This application was refused by the Elders; but in what manner, or in what words, I know not; for, a difference of opinion arising betwixt us, they appointed one of their number to write, without my privacy, their refusal. Our brethren, however, were resolved not to be said nay; for, some short time after, a very pressing letter was sent, to which, at last, our session and congregation were pleased to give a favourable answer. What was in the first answer from us, as I have already said, I know not; it was sent

without my approbation ; yet, both my reader and I might form some judgment of it, by the contents of the following return.

“ Craigmore, 18th April, 1810.

“ Dear Brethren,

“ Received your favour of the 12th instant ; which rather conveys the idea of some doubt in your minds, with respect to the propriety of our conduct, in doing what we have done. What our Minister has done, is either right or wrong ; if right, you are wrong, and we are wrong, and the greater our disappointment, the better ; but if we are right, the *contrary* is wrong ; and how long, error or apostacy is to be indulged, before the remedy ought to be applied, I'll leave you to judge. With respect to any thing premature or hasty, on our part, I can assure you, our minds were made up on the subject, when our Minister was ordained, and notes for stipend perfected with that proviso ; and if there was any necessity for halting between truth and error, we have been reluctantly held in that situation upwards of three months, not knowing whether to turn, being totally ignorant (till of late) of the stand you have made for the *truth*. Had we known of you the day our division took place, a division, in my opinion, would never have taken place ; and you would have been applied to, probably the next day, by the united voice of our congregation, which, no doubt, would have been attended to. And, why, my dear brethren, spurn at the supplication of a part ; a part, who, like Abraham, went out, not knowing whither they would go ? And, seeing a ray of hope hath broke forth on us, through our knowledge of your worthy Pastor, why would you, our dear brethren, blast our hopes and expectations ; and, I might add, the expectations of an inquiring neighbourhood, who will believe nothing but their eyes, that there is such a thing as a faithful Seceding Mi-

nister? I would again, in the name, and by the order of my brethren, for the sake of *Truth*, request the indulgence of one day's preaching, say Sabbath week, or fourteen days after, which, on MESSRS. DONNAN and NICHOLSON's return from Scotland, we expect supplies from that quarter, having obtained a grant from Mr. DONNAN. I hope you will not lose a post, in returning an answer.

“ For the Congregation,

“ THOMAS MULLIGAN.”

The reader will judge, from the above account, whether I had, or could have, any hand in dividing Randalstown congregation, as was long ago alleged, and even lately repeated, by a certain Rev. gentleman, who ought to have known better things; and, who, if I am not mistaken, knew other things. Farther, it appears, by the letter now quoted, that some other Ministers had promised help to this congregation, before any application was made to me; hence, it is more reasonable to infer, that the encouragement held out by them, would have a dividing effect, than any thing done by me.

Fourth in order, comes Lyle-hill. With respect to this congregation, the same remarks might be made as in the former instance. They knew nothing of me till after the separation; yet, by a paper from Lyle, already mentioned in the Scotch minutes, I was accused of dividing this congregation also; or, as they modestly add, in all probability, the means of pre-

venting a return. To this, I think I might reply, with something more than probability, that the Minister and Elders at Lyle, knew that I was no more the means of preventing a return, than I had been in any wise accessory to a division. The determined character, as well as the superior judgment of the chief people who left Lyle meeting-house, was not so ill known, to the session, as to justify them in expecting a return. A few individuals have since returned, and we heartily wish them much joy of them; for had they been truly of us, they would not have left us; but they went out, that it might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

Fifth, Ahoghill, now called Cullybackey, is part of the Seceding congregation of Ahoghill, with a number from the Burghers about the Clough-water, and the neighbourhood of Ballymena. In this place also, the scattered flock, collecting themselves together, made their application in the usual form, and received preaching in their turn, from the session and congregation of Killëug. This congregation, though not large, collected from different denominations, enjoy that complete harmony among themselves, which can only arise from Gospel principles, well understood, and wisely acted upon: and I hope they will continue "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the LORD, knowing that their labour shall not be in vain in the LORD."

Sixth, Belfast. In this place I arrived late on Saturday night, from Scotland, on my return from the Synod. When asked to preach, I at first refused. My friends told me, that I should certainly preach. My judgment indeed approved of their proposal; I expected nothing else; I designed nothing else. What could I do? I was now left to shift for myself; all my religious connexions in Scotland, as well as in Ireland, having not only forsaken me, but fairly abandoned their own principles. I resolved to preach; yet I felt, on this occasion, how much a man's prejudices, inclinations, and feelings, may be at war with his judgment. Next day, being Lord's day, I preached from these words in the second Psalm, "Rejoice with trembling." This subject was designed for another occasion, and though circumstances shut me up to it at this time, yet it did not seem altogether unsuitable, either to my present embarrassment, or to the state of matters in our religious connexion. As this day's service was rather by accident, an application followed some short time after to our session, who granted supplies, as they had done to applicants on former occasions.

Seventh congregation is situate about a mile north from Dervock, and known in our lists by the name of Cross-roads of Tuberdonie. This congregation, (in regard to numbers next to Killëug) consisting of sixty families, or upwards, has built a new church,

elated it, and erected a neat pulpit, which, in a country situation, may even be called elegant. As far as I have had an opportunity of knowing them, they are, in general, religiously inclined, and a considerable number of them even intelligent; and I hope they will be careful to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST."

The above-named congregations have been supplied, for these six years past, by me, not as an individual, but by continued applications to our session and congregation, who, after a few occasional grants, allowed them at last a regular share of every third Sabbath. In the long intervals of public preaching, they have endeavoured to edify one another by meeting regularly on the Lord's day, most of them with open doors, admitting, as hearers only, those who might choose to attend. A part of the day has been particularly devoted to the instruction of the rising generation, the root of future ages, and the hope of the church.

My services have been acknowledged by whatever they could afford, for the time being. In some instances of particular necessity, I have been even abundantly supplied by some of them, whose abilities and ready mind are always found sufficient for any emergency. If, then, they prosper in religion, pure, and undefiled, I am overpaid, and more than happy. I never made any demands upon them; never

entered into any arrangements with regard to support. A regular stipend, in the common mode, is so contrary to my judgment, or rather to Scripture supply, that I chose rather to accustom my brethren to support the Gospel by voluntary contributions; and thus gradually to wean them from the absurd, and anti-Scriptural plan of paying stipends by taxation. This scheme has given Christians a very perverse view of the subject; for, they generally consider, that when they have paid their tax, they have done their duty: thus their Ministers are neglected, an important Gospel duty set aside, Gospel service converted into a matter of mere revenue, and the power of godliness reduced to a meagre skeleton of a religious profession.

I shall, lastly, give a short account of our union and constitution as a Church. The origin of this union was, a number of societies, formed out of certain congregations, who had been betrayed and deserted by their hireling shepherds. These few sheep, scattered on the mountains of Israel, met, as already mentioned, by their representatives, at Portglenone. Of this meeting, as above noticed, I knew nothing at first, but by report. I was, however, invited to attend their next meeting in Ahoghill, which I did accordingly. We have continued our general assemblies, twice, thrice, or four times a-year, as circumstances directed. All the Elders in our connexion are members of these meetings, (as indeed they ought to be in all Churches)

without appointment or commission. Others are sent as commissioners, when the state of their respective congregations require a more full representation. Thus, all acquainted with the original form and constitution of the Kirk of Scotland, will see that our plan of meeting is much nearer the Presbyterial form of that Kirk, in her earlier and better days (which scarcely out-lived the days of JOHN KNOX), than the mock Presbyteries and Synods of the present day, which ought to be called Bishops' Courts, being a gross insult on the name of Presbytery.

We know, that many of our Christian brethren have been startled at our situation, Providence having left only one Minister. But, if this be any disadvantage, our forefathers were still under a greater, they not having even *one*, for many years after the Reformation had begun, among them, whom they could call a regular or stated Minister. Yea, in all the nations of Europe, there was scarcely ever more than one at a time, in any one place, during the first age of the Reformation; such as Calvin, at Geneva; Luther, in Germany; Zuinglius, in Switzerland, &c. I might also, add, that the Waldenses, and Albigenses, for many years, or rather ages, had not one clergyman among them, yet maintained their religious purity, and civil independence, at the same time.

It is also objected, "But how can one Minister hold a Presbytery?" I also ask, can two, three, five, or even



fifteen Ministers hold a Presbytery? No, truly. Ministers, as such, have nothing to do with a Presbytery; for without Elders, they possess no judicial power whatever. I shall not say that this is proper; yet, it is well known to be the constitution of our Presbyterian Church. The word Presbytery means the Eldership, or a meeting of Elders; and, if it be said, Are not Ministers Elders? I grant they are, but it is equally true, that they have no power, as Elders, to meet, unless when other Elders are present. Hence, it is also known, that no number of Ministers will constitute, without those commonly called lay Elders. A late instance to this purpose occurred in county Antrim, where a number of Ministers, met to ordain a young man, were under the necessity of waiting till an Elder was brought, by express, from a distance of fifteen or sixteen miles, before they could be constituted as a Presbytery, and proceed to ordination. I shall only add another instance, which came under my own observation, while in Scotland, where a Minister and two Elders constituted a Presbytery. They would not, indeed, enter upon business, farther than giving me, (at that time a preacher in their bounds) a few appointments, as the greater number of the Ministers and Elders were absent; they would only, as they said, meet in the usual way, to preserve their constitution.

The truth then, is, that any number of Elders may meet without Ministers, or one Minister, with

three, four, or five Elders; but no number of Ministers, either small or great, can form a Presbytery or Synod, without Elders. These facts, I am aware, are not commonly known among Christians, who are accustomed to see Ministers not only meeting with Elders, but usually taking the chief management so much upon themselves, that they forthwith conclude, that if there be no clergy, there can be no Presbytery; or, according to the old Proverb, in another kingdom, "No Bishop, no Church."

As an opportunity will occur of saying more on this subject afterwards, let it be finally observed, at this time, that for six years past, we have continued our meetings in the utmost harmony, and plainest simplicity. We have never had occasion to appeal to that worldly, political, and most of all to be dreaded decision, a VOTE. We have licensed two young men, MR. WILLIAM WILSON, and MR. HUGH M'INTYRE. At our last meeting in Craigmore, near Randalstown, in the open fields, on the 8th July, 1816, it was unanimously agreed, that said HUGH M'INTYRE, for some time past preacher of the Gospel, should be ordained to the office of the Ministry by the laying on of my hands, upon Wednesday, 21st of August, 1816.

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# Remarks

ON

## ORDINATION.

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THE novelty of our situation, and the prevailing want of information on this subject among Presbyterians, demand a few observations. Men generally measure every thing by the standard of their own customs; are much more attached to external forms, than to sacred *Truth*; and are more eager to grasp at shadows, than earnest to embrace the substance. In the present age, Christians know little more about Ordination, than a few Ministers gathered together, and laying their hands on the head of a young man. This, and this only, they consider as Presbyterian Ordination; without ever taking time to think, that this method could not always have been attained unto, and that, at a certain period, one man must have ordained another, and these two a third, and so on, till a greater number could associate for the purpose. Let it then be observed in general, that Ordination has been variously practised, in different countries, and in different ages in the same country. This subject has occasioned many disputes; every distinct church insisting that their peculiar mode is nearest to the word of God. Yet so many claimants to Apostolic purity, only proves that all have misunderstood, and deviated from the divine institution. Farther, it has been contended, that Ordination, by

the laying on of the Apostles' hands, was peculiar to them, as necessarily connected with the gift of the HOLY GHOST, and, on that account only, significant; but since that time, the laying on of hands has been an unmeaning ceremony, seeing no real gift can now be conferred. In opposition to this, it has been insisted on, that though the HOLY GHOST is not hereby given, yet it is necessary, as a visible sign of designation to office power. With regard, therefore, to the setting apart of certain men to office power in the Church of God, there has been no doubt in any age, or among any religious societies. The disputed point has been,—how shall this setting apart to office be gone about?

My object in this essay, is not to decide the question; but, by collecting together a number of facts, the better to enable my Christian brethren in some measure to satisfy their own minds, and to judge for themselves. With this view, I shall divide what I have to say on this subject, into three sections.

*Section First*, shall contain the Scripture account of laying on of hands.

*Section Second*, shall point out the method of ordination practised in the Church of Scotland, in her earlier and better days.

*Section Third*, shall contain a few remarks on our own case.

#### SECTION I.

On a subject of this kind, though only a matter of form, the word of God ought to be our chief director. In Scripture, then, we find that the laying on of hands, was used in general to point out any thing devoted to God, either in a good or bad sense of the word. Thus, men appointed to death, as the just punishment of certain crimes, were devoted or sentenced by the laying on of hands. In this manner, was the Israelitish woman's son who blasphemed put to death. "And the Lord spake

unto Moses, saying, bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and, let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head; and, let all the congregation stone him." The bullock also, to be offered for the whole congregation, was to be set apart in the same manner. "And the Elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock, before the Lord." Joshua the son of Nun likewise, was appointed commander-in-chief over Israel, and successor to Moses, by the laying on of hands. "And he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the Priest, and before all the congregation. And he (Moses) laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses." Here let it be observed, that though the High Priest was present, Moses ordained his own successor. But the particular example to our present purpose, is the Ordination or setting apart of the whole tribe of Levi, to minister to the Lord for the congregation of Israel.—Numbers VIII. 8—10. "And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together: and thou shalt bring the Levites before the Lord: and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites." If any person should object, and say that this took place under the ceremonial law; it is replied, that these Levites were to serve the Lord, and the whole congregation; and, can any man now, under the Gospel, be set apart to a service more solemn, than the service of God? Besides, no change of dispensation, can ever alter the nature of an outward form, so that the laying on of hands should in any age, be any thing else than a ceremony. But what silences every objection at once, is, that this very mode of setting apart, by laying on of hands, throughout the whole dispensation of grace, under Old or New Testament, takes its origin from the very passage now before us. Any person, or persons, therefore, who are designed to serve a

whole congregation, ought to be set apart by the hands of that congregation. This is surely right reason, as well as pure Scripture. As for this practice under the New Testament, we have only one instance, as far as I recollect, in which it confers office power without any addition of spiritual-gifts. The case to which I refer is, that, of the appointment of the seven Deacons. These men were already full of faith and of the HOLY GHOST; their Ordination, therefore, in the manner described, could only be to office power in the Church. But, still a difficulty remains, whether the appointment of the Deacons, by the laying on of the Apostles' hands, be a case in point? The office of Deacon was quite new, and therefore required a divine institution. If then the Apostles, in this instance, directly represented the person of Christ, as the only Institutor of Ordinances in his own church, (which they certainly did) this transaction is absolutely inimitable by ordinary ministers of the word. At any rate, this case before us contains the divine authority for the office of Deacon; and if any man will insist on following Apostolic example, as to the mode and form, let him not stretch it too far, lest, in proving too much, he prove nothing. That Bishops, Pastors, or Elders, were ordained to their office, is readily granted; but the question is, according to what form? For, I must beg leave to say, that the appointment of Deacons, by the laying on of hands, will not prove the Ordination of Ministers or Elders by the same form. By this, I do not mean to say, that these offices, though distinct, require a different form: I only wish, that passages of Scripture should not be perverted, and, by man's device, be forced to cover cases which the Spirit of God never intended; for if any part of Scripture is made to apply to more than the precise object in view for the time being, or one in all respects exactly similar, we are then adding to the word of God, a practice not only forbidden, but extremely dangerous; yea, a practice

which has been the source of all error, and parent of all new ordinances and offices in the church. Let it be observed once more, that the laying on of hands mentioned in the XIII. chapter of the Acts, was neither a conferring of gifts, nor of office power, but merely a token of approbation by the Church of Antioch, in regard of the work and mission, to which the Holy Ghost had called Barnabas and Saul. The men had not only been in office long before this, but at the very time of their calling by the spirit, were exercising the full office of the ministry. Their call, therefore, was not to any office, but to a special work; for the Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the *work* whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." Neither will the Ordination of Timothy, as it is called, help us in our difficulty; for that which was given him by the laying on of Paul's hands, was an inward gift, not an outward office: the words are, "Neglect not the gift which is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, or Eldership." Some commentators, by the Eldership here mentioned, understand the office of Elder, or Eldership in Paul, as distinguished from the office of Apostle, or Apostleship, with which he was also invested. This remark indeed seems to be confirmed by what is added on this subject in second Timothy, 1. 6. where instead of the Presbytery or Eldership, it is said, "by the putting on of my hands;" which appears to make Paul's two hands, and the Presbytery, amount to the same thing. Yet still, in whatever way we take the words, they refer more directly to an inward gift, than an outward office; this latter being only inferred without any proper authority. The whole of verse sixth reads thus—"Wherefore, I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is *in* thee, by the putting on of my hands." I grant, that office power

and real gifts are not usually separated, nor easily separable, in an Apostolic church; yet, gifts were often given by the laying on of hands, when no office was added.

Lastly, on this part of the subject allow me to observe, that a great many of our incorrect notions about Ordination arise from the absurd and whimsical doctrine of the flux of power from the Apostles, that is, that the Ministerial office is derived from the Apostles by a kind of religious genealogy. This gives birth to another notion, equally absurd with the former, to wit, that WE, the CLERGY, are the successors of the Apostles. This again implies a number of other absurdities, such as that our Saviour appointed a sacred order of Clergy, in the New Testament Church, as he had done under the former dispensation. Besides, it supposes that the Apostles are either dead or laid aside; but, if the Apostles, as Apostles of CHRIST be dead, then are we built upon a dead foundation. True, PETER, JAMES, and JOHN are dead; but it is as true that the Apostles, as such, never die; therefore, can have no successors in that character. To illustrate a little farther what I intend, let us suppose that a number of Heathens, say nine or ten, are walking along the coast of China, that that they find some books cast upon the shore from the wreck of a ship; upon opening them, they discover that they are New Testaments in their own language, which Christian Missionaries had been sending to the distant provinces. They read them, they believe them, and in consequence of understanding them, form themselves into a Christian Church. They farther discover, that the Apostles of Christ, have appointed that there should be Elders in every such society of Believers. Accordingly, they give a solemn call to this office, to some of their own number; these accept, and thus derive their office from the Apostles of CHRIST, in as full a sense, as if PAUL himself had preached the Gospel in China, and with his own hands had ordained



them. This is all the flux of power known to the New Testament of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

SECTION II.

*Plan of Ordination practised by the Church of Scotland, in her earlier and better days.*

On this part of the subject I have little else to do, than to quote authority. The Reformation in Scotland began about the year 1494, and for many years after this, the people, who had no stated Ministers, met in societies, endeavouring to edify one another as well as they could. In process of time, however, they formed into one body, known in history by the name of *the Congregation*. They considered the Clergy of the old Church, not lawful Ministers of the word, because not called to their office by the voice of the people. The old Church, with her Clergy, being thus set aside, it rather appears, from the whole history, that our Reformers had no design of again erecting a new corporate sacred order of Clergy, in their place. A few plain men, without black gowns, or white bands, began to preach in different places, being generally called thereto by the voice of the people, without any farther ceremony; and without any other title, than plain JOHN ROUGH, JOHN WILLOCK, or JOHN KNOX. That enchanting title HIS REVERENCE, which on different occasions, works so many wonders among the vulgar, was not known among them. But, as MR. KNOX must be considered as the beginning of the Scottish Clergy, after the Reformation, I shall give the reader an account of the manner in which he was made a Minister; for, what is now called Presbyterial Ordination, was not then come in fashion. The following, I copy from KNOX's History of the Reformation:—

“ At Easter, after anno 1547, came to the castle of St. Andrew's, JOHN KNOX. They of the place, but especially MR. HENRY BALNAVES and JOHN ROUGH,

(Rock) preacher, perceiving the manner of his doctrine, began earnestly to travail with him, that he would take the function of Preacher upon him; but he refused, alledging that he would not run where God had not called him; meaning, that he would do nothing without a lawful vocation: whereupon they privily among themselves advising, having with them, in council, SIR DAVID LINDSAY of the Mount, they concluded that they would give a charge to the said JOHN, and that publicly, by the mouth of the Preacher. And, so, upon a certain day, a sermon had of the election of Ministers, what power the congregation, how small soever that it was, passing the number of two or three, had above any man, namely, in the time of need, as that was, in whom they supposed, and espied the gifts of God to be; and how dangerous it was to refuse, and not to hear, the voice of such as desired to be instructed.

“ These, and other heads, we say, declared the said JOHN ROUGH, Preacher, directed his words to the said JOHN KNOX, saying, ‘ Brother, ye shall not be offended, albeit that I speak unto you that which I have in charge, even from all those that are here present, which is this:—In the name of GOD, and of his SON JESUS CHRIST, and in the name of these, who presently call you by my mouth, I charge you that you refuse not this holy vocation; but, as ye tender the glory of GOD, the increase of CHRIST’s kingdom, the edification of your brethren, and the comfort of me, whom ye understand well enough to be oppressed by the multitude of labours, that ye take upon you the public office and charge of preaching, even as ye look to avoid GOD’s heavy displeasure, and desire that he shall multiply his graces upon you.’ And in the end, he said to those that were present, ‘ Was not this your charge to me? and do ye not approve of this vocation?’ They answered, ‘ It is, and we approve it.’ Whereat, the said MR. JOHN, abashed, burst forth in most abun-

dant tears, and withdrew himself to his chamber." KNOX, after continuing in retirement for a number of days, made his appearance in public, commenced preaching, and, as is generally known, carried on the Reformation with success.

The Rev. DR. M'CRIE, old light Seceding Minister of Edinburgh, in his Life of KNOX, a book lately published, and much esteemed by good judges, makes the following remarks on that which I have quoted above:—"We must not, however," says the Doctor, "imagine that his distress of mind, and the reluctance which he discovered in complying with the call which he had now received, proceeded from consciousness of its invalidity, through the defect of certain external formalities, which had been usual in the Church, or which, in ordinary cases, may be observed with propriety, in the installation of persons into sacred offices. These, as far as warranted by Scripture; or, conducive to the preservation of decent order, he did not condemn; and, his judgment concerning them, may be learned from the early practice of the Scottish Reformed Church, in the organization of which he had so active a share. In common with all the original Reformers, he rejected the necessity of Episcopal Ordination, as totally unauthorized by the Laws of CHRIST; nor did he even regard the imposition of the hands of Presbyters, as a rite essential to the validity of orders, or of necessary observance in all circumstances of the Church."

In connection with what is already cited, I shall farther quote the first book of Discipline of the Church of Scotland. Under the article "Admission," they say: "Other ceremony than the public approbation of the people, and declaration of the chief Minister, that the person there presented, is appointed to serve the Church, we cannot approve, for albeit the Apostles used imposition of hands, yet seeing the miracle is ceased, the using of the ceremony we judge not necessary."

At what period, the laying on of hands was introduced into the Scotch Presbyterian Church, I am not able at present to inform my reader; I can only tell him, that it was not known in that country, till after the year 1653. MR. WILLIAM ERBERY, who wrote several pieces, in the above year, and in the year before, speaking of Ordination, has the following words:—"Indeed *that* of the Prelates was but a form and a foolery too, yet was it wiser than that Ordination of our English Presbyters, where no gift of the spirit is pretended or expected; far foolisher than the Scots Presbytery, who lay no hands at all, because no gift follows. These make Ministers, and ordain Elders, without the laying on of hands." In another place, near the end, he makes the following remark. "Next to Baptism, the doctrine or ordinance of laying on of hands follows, whereto as the Apostles' hands must be joined, so the gift of the spirit was ever with it, without which, the laying on of hands is but an empty ceremony, as 'tis in all the Churches, only the Church of Scotland is more subtile, and wise, not to use that foolish compliment, but to ordain without any laying of hands, knowing no gift is now given thereby."

### SECTION III.

#### *Our own Case.*

After what I have brought forward in the foregoing section, I hope that our very singular situation will occasion no farther difficulty to our Christian brethren, of any denomination; for, if the solemn call of the people, without any laying on of hands be sufficient Prebyterial Ordination, as in the case of MR. KNOX, it follows, of course, that the hands, even of one Minister, is more than sufficient; or, as we usually say, abundance of law. Suppose, then, that Providence had not even kept me from the hour of temptation, the people of our connexion, by themselves, could have made a Pastor suited to their own mind, and no denomination of Pres-

byterians in Scotland or Ireland, could either find fault with them, or refuse his claim to the Ministry, without making void their own title to the sacred office; seeing that the men, from whom we all derive our Ordination, were not set apart by the present fashion of laying on of hands. In short, all Scotch Presbyterians are under the necessity of maintaining that the laying on of hands is not essential to make a Minister; and, that the solemn call of a congregation is sufficient, especially in cases of necessity. To maintain the contrary, would be indeed contrary to Scripture, as well as to the opinion of the first Reformers of the Church of Scotland, as to the manner of ordaining Ministers; to wit, that so small a congregation as four or five Christians, possessed the right of calling any one of that small number, to be their Minister; who, being called, was not at liberty to refuse; and by such solemn call became their Minister accordingly.

It has been objected by many, "But how can Mr. B. alone ordain a Minister? How could he use that form of prayer, used on such occasions, 'by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery?'" The first part of this objection is already fully answered, by what I have written above. To the second part, I reply, that Mr. B. has as good a right to tell a lie in prayer as any other Minister. At every Ordination, according to the present plan, the Minister, pronouncing the Ordination prayer, certainly pronounces a falsehood; he says, "the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery," whereas not a Presbyter, of one kind or other, lays on a hand; for I have already showed that Ministers, by themselves, in any transaction of this nature, have not even the power of Elders. This has been, and still is the law of our own Church, according to the constitution of which, the moment that Ministers separate from Elders, they instantly deprive themselves of all judicial power. Perhaps it will be said, that that part of the Presbytery which is competent, lays on hands. I do not dispute the propriety of Ministers Or-

daining others to the office of the Ministry ; but why call it the deed or work of a Presbytery, when it really and truly is no such thing? Ministers, as I have said once and again, make no Presbytery, nor even part of a Presbytery, without Elders. It follows, of course, that five or six Ministers proceeding to lay on hands without Elders, instantly dissolve the Presbytery, and rob themselves of their own power. If, then, the laws of our own Church are to be adhered to strictly, these mock Presbyteries ought to be given up. Either let all the Eldership, without distinction, lay on hands ; or, if Ministers only do so, let them drop that absurd expression commonly used in prayer, " The laying on of the hands of the Presbytery." If I, therefore, lay on my two hands, which is certainly Apostolical, here is not only a plurality of hands, but all the hands competent within the Presbytery, according to the present mode. Again, the expression used in prayer is not about persons, but hands ; and surely the hands of one Minister, if there be no more, are as much the hands of the Presbytery as the hands of ten or twelve. For, as formerly said, the question is not about the number of Ministers, but the number of hands. Besides, in our extraordinary case, the Confession of Faith allows something extraordinary to be done. The divines, also, observe that one congregation ought not to Ordain, if they can conveniently join with others ; which fairly implies, that even one congregation, or the Eldership of one congregation, might Ordain, if they cannot conveniently be assisted by others. In our situation we have very few to whom we could apply, and perhaps still fewer who would be willing to assist us. This borrowing scheme, when proposed by two or three individuals, was instantly rejected by the whole connexion, and, I must say, as frankly given up by those who had suggested it. The plan was considered, not only as unnecessary, but extremely improper ; because, in so doing, we should be guilty, yea, wantonly criminal, in feeding the already over-

grown superstition of the Professors of the present age. On this, however, I need not insist—It has been unanimously agreed that my hands shall be sufficient in the mean time; and when we have got two Ministers, these shall be employed in ordaining a third, &c. As for the words to be used at the time of laying on hands, the Presbytery would give me no directions; they allowed me to use any form I might think best; or, whatever, in the time of prayer, might naturally occur. The words used, as nearly as I can recollect, were—“The young man, who, in thy name, is now set apart to the office of the Ministry, by the laying on of my hands.”

Let it be observed once more, that the greater part of our connexion wished rather that all the Elders should lay on their hands along with me; and, thereby, make the Ordination the act or deed of the whole Presbytery: yet, to please a few of their weaker Brethren, who scrupled at this, as too far from the common plan of other Churches, they yielded to them, that it should be according to the method already described; being of opinion, that the work might be done without any hands, by a solemn invitation, as in the case of JOHN KNOX, and according to the practice of the Church of Scotland for many years, in her earlier and better days.

*Finis.*

*Byce's Variation*

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F. D. Finlay, Printer, Belfast.
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